

S A M S O N:
A N
O R A T O R I O.

As it is Perform'd at the

T H E A T R E - R O Y A L in Covent-Garden.

Alter'd and adapted to the *S T A G E* from the *S A M S O N*
A G O N I S T E S of *John Milton.*

Set to Music by *G E O R G E F R E D E R I C H A N D E L.*



Printed in the *Y E A R M D C C X L V I I I.*

[*Price Four-pence.*]

1609/5460.



Dramatis Personæ.

ISRAELITES.

SAMSON.

MANOA, *Father to Samson.*

MICAH, *Friend to Samson.*

An Israelite Officer.

Chorus of Israelites.

PHILISTINES.

DALILA, *Wife of Samson.*

HARAPHA, *a Giant.*

*Chorus of Philistine Women, and Priests
of Dagon.*

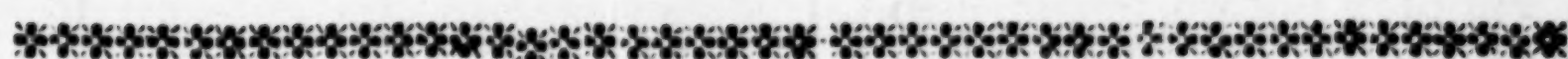
SCENE, *Before the Prison in Gaza.*



SAMSON:



S A M S O N:
A N
O R A T O R I O.



A C T I. S C E N E I.

SAMSON *blind, and in chains. Chorus of the priests of Dagon celebrating his festival.*

S A M S O N.



HIS day, a solemn feast to *Dagon* held,
Relieves me from my task of servile toil;
Unwillingly their superstition yields
This rest! To breathe Heav'n's air fresh blowing,
pure and sweet.

Chorus of the Priests of *Dagon*.

*Awake the trumpet's lofty sound;
The joyful sacred festival comes round,
When Dagon, King of all the Earth, is crown'd.*

A I R.

*Ye men of Gaza, hither bring
The merry pipe and pleasing string,
The solemn hymn and chearful song;
Be Dagon prais'd by ev'ry tongue.*

[Chorus repeated.]

A I R.

*Loud as the thunder's awful voice,
In notes of triumph, notes of praise,
So high great Dagon's name we'll raise,
That Heav'n and Earth may hear how we rejoice.*

A 2

A I R.

A I R.

*Then free from sorrow, free from thrall,
All blithe and gay,
With sports and play
We'll celebrate his festival.*

[Chorus repeated.]

Samson. Why by an Angel was my birth foretold,
As in a fiery column ascending
From off the altar, in my parents' sight?
Why was my nurture order'd and prescrib'd
As of a person separate to God?
If I must die, betray'd and captiv'd thus,
The scorn and gaze of foes!—O cruel thought!
My griefs find no redress; they inward prey,
Like gangreen'd wounds, immedicable grown,

A I R.

Samson. *Torments, alas! are not confin'd
To heart, or head, or breast;
But will a secret passage find
Into the very inmost mind,
With pains intense oppress;
That rob the soul itself of rest.*

S C E N E II.

SAMSON, MICAH, and Chorus of Israelites.

Micah. [Apart.] O change beyond report, thought, or
belief!

See how he lies with languish'd head, unpropp'd!
Abandon'd! past all hope! Can this be he?
Heroic *Samson*? whom no strength of man,
Nor fury of the fiercest beast cou'd quell?
Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid;
Ran weaponless on armies clad in iron,
Useless the temper'd steel, or coat of Mail.

A I R.

Micah. *O mirrour of our fickle state!
In birth, in strength, in deeds how great!
From highest glory fall'n so low,
Sunk in the deep abyss of woe.*

Samson.

Samson. [*Apart.*] Whom have I to complain of but myself,
 Who Heav'n's great trust cou'd not in silence keep,
 But weakly to a woman must reveal it?
 O glorious strength! O impotence of mind!
 But without wisdom what does strength avail?
 Proudly secure, yet liable to fall.

God (when he gave it) hung it in my hair,
 To shew how slight the gift.—But, peace, my soul,
 Strength was my bane, the source of all my woes,
 Each, told apart, would ask a life to wail.

Micah. [*To Samson.*] Matchless in might! once *Isr'el's*
 glory, now her grief;

We come, thy friends well known, to visit thee.
 If words have charms to swage thy troubled mind,
 We'll pour their balm into its fester'd wounds.

Samson. Welcome, my friends, experience teaches now
 How counterfeit the coin of friendship is,
 That's only in the superscription shewn.
 In the warm sun-shine of our prosp'rous days
 Friends swarm; but in the winter of adversity
 Draw in their heads; tho' sought, not to be found.

Micah. Which shall we first bewail, thy bondage, or lost sight?

“Prison within prison! Inseparably dark!
 “Thou art become the dungeon of thyself!
 “For ever now shut up with gloomy night,
 “Since inward light puts forth no visual beam.

Samson. O loss of sight! of thee I most complain!
 O worse than beggary, old age, or chains!
 My very soul in real darkness dwells!

“Light, the prime work of God, to me's extinct,
 “And all her objects of delight annull'd,
 “Which might have sooth'd my griefs; the vilest worm
 “Excels me now; it creeps, but then it sees.
 “Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half:
 “Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave.
 “Alive, yet bury'd, amidst all ills of life,
 “Life in captivity with inhuman foes.

A I R.

Samson. Total eclipse! no sun, no moon!
All dark amidst the blaze of noon!
O glorious light! No chearing ray
To glad my eyes with welcome day:
Why thus depriv'd thy prime decree,
Sun, moon, and stars are dark to me.

Micah.

Micah. Since light so necessary is to life,
That in the soul 'tis almost life itself,
Why to the tender eye is sight confin'd?
So obvious, and so easy to be quench'd.
Why not, as feeling, thro' all parts diffus'd,
That we might look at will thro' ev'ry pore?

C H O R U S.

O first-created beam! and thou great word!
Let there be light! and light was over all;
One heav'nly blaze shone round this earthly ball,
To thy dark servant life by light afford.

Samson. You see, my friends, how woes inclose me round:
But, had I sight, how cou'd I heave my head
For shame? Thus, for a word or tear, divulge
To a false woman God's most secret gift,
And then be sung or proverb'd for a fool.

Micah. The wisest men have err'd, and been deceiv'd
By female arts. Deject not then thyself,
Who hast of griefs a load. Yet men will ask,
Why did not *Samson* rather wed at home?
In his own tribe are fairer, or as fair.

Samson. O that I had! Alas, fond wish! too late.
That specious monster! *Dalila!* my snare!
Myself the cause, who, vanquish'd by her tears,
Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.

Micah. Here comes thy reverend sire, old *Manoa*,
With careful steps, and locks as white as down.

Samson. Alas! another grief that name awakes.

S C E N E III.

SAMSON, MICAH, MANOA, and the Chorus of
Israelites.

Manoa. Brethren, and men of *Dan*, say, where's my son?
Samson, fond *Isr'el's* boast? Inform my age.

Micah. As signal now in low dejected state,
As in the height of pow'r. See where he lies.

Manoa. O miserable change! Is this the man
Renown'd afar, the dread of *Isr'el's* foes?
Who, with an Angel's strength, their armies duell'd,
Himself an army; now unequal match
To guard his breast against the coward's spear.

Micah. O ever-failing trust in mortal strength!
And O what not deceivable and vain in man!

Mic.

A I R.

Mic. *God of our fathers ! what is man,
 So proud, so vain, so great in story !
 His Fame, a blast ; his life, a span ;
 A bubble at the height of glory :
 Oft' he that's most exalted high,
 Unseemly falls in human eye.*

Manoa. The good we wish for often proves our bane.
 I pray'd for children, and I gain'd a son,
 And such a son as all men hail'd me happy :
 But who'd be now a father in my stead ?
 The blessing drew a scorpion's tail behind.
 This plant (select and sacred for a while,
 The miracle of all !) was, in one hour,
 Ensnar'd, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
 His foes derision, captive, poor and blind.

A I R..

Manoa. *Thy glorious deeds inspir'd my tongue,
 Whilst airs of joy from thence did flow ;
 To sorrow now I tune my song,
 And set my harp to notes of woe.
 " The warlike cornet spoke aloud
 " Your triumphs to the shouting crowd ;
 " Now solemn music plays its part,
 " And shews the anguish of my heart.*

Samson. Justly these evils have befall'n thy son.
 Sole author I, sole cause, who have profan'd
 The mysteries of God, by me betray'd
 To faithless parlies, feminine assaults.
 To the false fair I yielded all my heart ;
 So far effeminacy held me yok'd
 Her slave. O foul indignity ! O blot
 To honour and to arms !

Manoa. Worse yet remains.
 This day they celebrate with pomps and sports,
 And sacrifice to *Dagon*, Idol God !
 Who gave thee bound and blind into their hands :
 Thus is he magnify'd ; the living God
 Blasphem'd, and scorn'd by that idolatrous rout.

Samson. This have I done, this pomp, this honour brought
 To Idol *Dagon* ; but to *Isr'el* shame,
 And our true God disgrace. My griefs, for this, For-

Forbid mine eye to close, or thoughts to rest.
 But now the strife shall end; me overthrown,
Dagon presumes to enter lists with God,
 Who, thus provok'd, will not connive, but rouse
 His fury soon, and his great name assert.
Dagon shall stoop, e're long be quite despoil'd
 Of all those boasted trophies won on me.

A I R.

Samson. *Why does the God of Isr'el sleep?
 Arise with dreadful sound,
 And clouds encompass'd round,
 Then shall the heathen hear thy thunder deep.
 The tempest of thy wrath now raise,
 In whirlwind them pursue,
 Full fraught with vengeance due,
 'Till shame and trouble all thy foes shall seize.*

Micah. There lies our hope: True prophet may'st thou be,
 That God may vindicate his glorious name;
 Nor let us doubt whether God is Lord, or *Dagon*.

C H O R U S.

*Then shall they know, that he, whose name
 Jehovah is alone,
 O'er all the earth but one,
 Was ever the most high, and still the same.*

Manoa. For thee, my dearest son, must thou mean while
 Lie thus neglected in this loathsome plight?

Samson. It shou'd be so, to expiate my crime,
 If possible: Shameful garrulity!
 Had I reveal'd the secret of a friend,
 Most heinous that: But impiously to blab
 God's counsel --- is a sin without a name.

Manoa. Be for thy fault contrite: But, O my Son,
 To high disposal leave the forfeit due.
 God may relent, and quit thee all his debt;
 Reject not then the offer'd means of life.
 Already have I treated with some lords
 To ransom thee: Revenge is fated now
 To see thee thus, who cannot harm them more.

Samson. Why shou'd I live? "In youthful courage once,
 "And deeds of strength, all mortals I excell'd;
 "Dreaded I walk'd o'er hostile Ground, fearless myself,
 " 'Till

" 'Till, swoln with pride, I fell into the pit

" Of fair, fallacious looks ; now, sham'd and quell'd,

" In what can I be useful to my friends ?

" But loiter idly on the household hearth,

" A burd'nous drone, to visitants a gaze,

" 'Till length of years, and sedentary numbness,

" Shall craze my limbs, vain monuments of strength !

Manoa. " Better at home lie bed-rid, unemploy'd,

" Than with thy strength serve them thou should'st annoy :

" God may enlighten yet thy darken'd eyes,

" Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast.

Samson. Soon shall these orbs to double darkness yield ;

My genial spirits droop, my hopes are flat ;

Nature in me seems weary of herself ;

My race of glory run, and race of shame ;

Death, invocated oft', shall end my pains,

And lay me gently down with them that rest.

Micah. Then long eternity shall greet your bliss ;

No more of earthly joys, so false and vain !

A I R.

Joys, that are pure, sincerely good,

Shall then o'ertake you as a flood :

Where truth and peace do ever shine,

With love that's perfectly divine.

C H O R U S.

Then round about the starry throne

Of him who ever rules alone,

Your heav'nly-guided soul shall climb,

Of all this earthy grossness quit,

With glory crown'd, for ever sit,

And triumph over Death, and thee, O Time.



B

ACT



ACT II. SCENE I.

SAMSON, MICAH, MANOA, *and the*
Chorus of ISRAELITES.

MANOA.

DEspair not thus ; you once were God's delight ;
His destin'd from the womb ; by him led on
To deeds above the nerve of mortal arm ;
Under his eye abstemious you grew up ;
Nor did the dancing ruby, sparkling, out-pour'd,
Allure you from the cool crystalline stream.

Samson. Where'er the liquid brook or fountain flow'd
I drank, nor envy'd man the chearing grape ;
But what avail'd this temp'rance, not compleat,
Against another object more enticing ?
I laid my strength in lust's lascivious lap.

Manoa. Trust yet in God ; the father's timely care
Shall prosecute the means to free thee hence.
Mean time, all healing words from these thy friends admit.

A I R.

Manoa. *Just are the ways of God to man,
Let none his secret actions scan ;
For all is best, tho' oft' we doubt
Of what his wisdom brings about :
Still his unsearchable dispose
Blesses the righteous in the close.*

Samson. My evils hopeless are ; one pray'r remains,
A speedy death, to close my miseries.

Micah. Relieve thy champion, image of thy strength ;
And turn his labours to a peaceful end.

A I R.

Micah. *Return, O God of hosts ! behold
Thy servant in distress,
His mighty griefs redress,
Nor by the heathen be they told.*

CH O-

C H O R U S.

*To dust his glory they would tread,
And number him amongst the dead.*

S C E N E II.

SAMSON, MICAH, DALILA, *Chorus of Israelites, and
Virgins attending DALILA.*

Micah. But who is this, that, so bedeck'd and gay,
Comes this way sailing like a stately ship,
With all her streamers waving in the winds;
An odorous perfume her harbinger.

A damsel train behind? 'Tis *Dalila*, thy wife.

Samson. My wife! my trait'refs! Let her not come near me.

Micah. She stands, and eyes thee fix'd, with head declin'd,
(Like a fair flow'r furcharg'd with dew) she weeps;
Her words, address'd to thee, seem tears dissolv'd,
Wetting the borders of her filken vail.

Dalila. With doubtful feet, and wav'ring resolution,
I come, O *Samson*! dreading thy displeasure;
But conjugal affection led me on,
Prevailing over fear and tim'rous doubt;
Glad if, in aught, my help or love cou'd serve
To expiate my rash, unthought misdeed.

Samson. Out, thou *Hyæna*! 'twas malice brought thee here:
These are the arts of women false, like thee,
To break all vows, repent, deceive, submit;
Then, with instructed skill, again transgress.
The wisest men have met such bosom-snakes,
Beguil'd like me, to ages an example.

Dalila. I wou'd not lessen my offence, yet beg
To weigh it by itself; what is it then,
But a curiosity, a small female fault,
Greedy of secrets, but to publish them?
Why wou'd you trust a woman's frailty then?
And to her importunity your strength?
A mutual weakness mutual pardon claims.

Samson. How cunningly the forceress displays
Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine?
I to myself was false, e're thou to me;
Bitter reproach! but true. The pardon then
I to my folly give, take thou to thine.

A I R.

*With plaintive notes and am'rous moan,
Thus cooes the turtle left alone;
Like her, averse to each delight,
She wears the tedious widow'd night;
But, when her absent mate returns,
With doubled raptures then she burns.*

Dalila. Alas! th' event was worse than I foresaw:
Fearless at home of partners in my love,
'Twas jealousy did prompt to keep you there,
Both day and night, love's pris'ner, wholly mine.

Samson. Did love constrain thee? No, 'twas raging lust.
Love seeks for love, thy treason fought my hate.
In vain you strive to cover shame with shame.
Once join'd to me, tho' judg'd your country's foe,
Parents, and all, were in the husband lost.

A I R.

*Your charms to ruin led the way,
My sense depriv'd,
My strength enslav'd,
As I did love, you did betray.
How great the curse! How hard my fate
To pass life's sea with such a mate!*

Dalila. Forgive what's done, nor think of what's past cure;
From forth this prison-house come home to me,
Where with redoubled love, and nursing care,
(To me glad office!) my virgins and myself
Shall tend about thee to extremest age.

A I R.

Dalila. *My faith and truth, O Samson, prove;
But hear me, hear the voice of love;
With love no mortal can be cloy'd;
All Happiness is love enjoy'd.*

Chorus of Virgins.

*Her faith and truth, O Samson, prove;
But hear her, hear the voice of love.*

A I R.

Dalila. *To fleeting pleasures make your court,
No moment lose, for life is short;*

The

*The present Now's our only time,
The missing That our only crime.
How charming is domestic ease!
A thousand ways I'll strive to please:
Life is not lost, tho' lost your sight,
Let other senses taste delight.*

Chorus repeated.

*Her faith and truth, O Samson, prove;
But hear her, hear the voice of love.*

Samson. Ne'er think of that; I know thy warbling charms,
Thy trains, thy wiles, and fair enchanted Cup;
Their force is null'd; where once I have been caught,
I shun the snare; these chains, this prison-house
I count the house of liberty to thine.

Dalila. Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand.

Samson. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake
My sudden rage, to tear thee limb from limb:
At distance I forgive; depart with that:
Now triumph in thy falsehood; so farewell.

Dalila. Thou art more deaf to pray'rs than winds or seas.
Thy anger rages an eternal tempest;
Why should I humbly sue for peace, thus scorn'd,
With infamy upon my name denounc'd?
When in this land I ever shall be held
The first of women-kind, living or dead.
My praises shall be sung at solemn feasts,
Who sav'd my country from a fierce destroyer.

D U E T.

Dalila. *Traitor to love, I'll sue no more
For pardon scorn'd; your threats give o'er.*

Samson. *Traitress to love, I'll hear no more
The charmer's voice; your arts give o'er.*

S C E N E III.

SAMSON, MICAH, and the Chorus of Israelites.

Micah. She's gone, a serpent manifest, her sting
Discover'd in the end.

Samson. So let her go;
God sent her here to aggravate my folly.

A I R.

A I R.

*It is not virtue, valour, wit,
Or comeliness of grace,
That woman's love can truly hit,
Or in her heart claim place.*

*Still wav'ring where their choice to fix,
Too oft' they chuse the wrong ;
So much self-love does rule the sex,
They nothing else love long.*

Samson. Favour'd of Heav'n is he who finds one true ;
How rarely found! — his way to peace is smooth.

C H O R U S.

*To man God's universal law
Gave pow'r to keep the wife in awe ;
Thus shall his life be ne'er dismay'd,
By female usurpation sway'd.*

S C E N E IV.

SAMSON, MICAH, HARAPHA, *Chorus of Israelites,
and Priests of Dagon.*

Micah. No words of peace, no voice-enchancing fear,
A rougher tongue expect. — Here's *Harapha* ;
I know him by his stride, and haughty look.

Harapha. I come not, *Samson*, to condole thy chance ;
I am of *Gath* ; men call me *Harapha* ;
Thou know'st me now ; of thy prodigious might
Much have I heard, incredible to me !
Nor less displeas'd, that never in the field
We met, to try each other's deeds of strength :
I'd see if thy appearance answers loud report.

Samson. The way to know, were not to see, but taste.

Harapha. Ha ! dost thou then already single me ?
I thought that labour, and thy chains, had tam'd thee.
Had fortune brought me to that field of death,
Where thou wrought'st Wonders with an *As's* jaw,
I'd left thy carcase where the *As's* lay thrown.

Samson. Boast not of what thou would'st have done, but do.

Harapha. The Honour certain to have won from thee
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out ;
To combat with a blind Man, I disdain.

A I R.

A I R.

*Honour and arms scorn such a foe,
 Tho' I cou'd end thee at a blow;
 Poor victory,
 To conquer thee,
 Or glory in thy overthrow:
 Vanquish a slave that is half slain!
 So mean a triumph I disdain.*

Samson. " Who cou'd withstand me, single and unarm'd,
 " 'Till a vile woman, breaking marriage-vows,
 " Did circumvent me?—But now put on your arms,
 " Then take for spear your weighty weaver's beam,
 " And come within my reach; this oaken staff
 " Shall raise such outcries on thy clatter'd iron,
 " Thou oft' shalt wish thyself at *Gath* again.

Harapha. " Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms,
 " The hero's ornament, had not some spells
 " Of curs'd magician charm'd thee into strength,
 " Thou feign'st at birth was given thee in thy hair.

Samson. " To thy *Philistine* race I leave th' enchanter's arts,
 " To *Isr'el's* sons forbid. At my nativity
 " Thro' all my limbs was heav'nly strength diffus'd.
 " Whilst (as I vow'd) these locks unshorn I kept.

A I R.

Samson. *My strength is from the living God,
 By Heav'n free-gifted at my birth,
 To quell the mighty of the earth,
 And prove the brutal tyrant's rod:
 But to the righteous peace and rest,
 With liberty to all oppress.*

Harapha. " Thy God regards thee not, has given thee up
 " A prey to us, to grind among our slaves.

Samson. " This I deserve, and more; yet pardon hope
 " From him whose ear and eye are ever open
 " To the suppliant's cry; in confidence whereof
 " I here defy thee to the deadly proof.

Harapha. With thee? a man condemn'd! a slave enroll'd!
 No worthy match to stain the warrior's sword.

Samson. Cam'st thou for this, vain boaster? yet take heed;
 My heels are fetter'd, but my hands are free.
 Thou bulk, of spirit void, I once again,
 Blind and in chains, provoke thee to the fight.

Harapha. O *Dagon*! can I hear this insolence,
To me unus'd, not rend'ring instant death?

D U E T. *Samson and Harapha.*

Samson. Go, baffled coward, go,
Lest vengeance lay thee low;
In safety fly my wrath with speed.

Harapha. Presume not on thy God,
Who under foot has trod
Thy strength and thee, at greatest need.

Both. Go, baffled coward, go, &c.
Presume not on thy God, &c.

Micah. Here lies the proof: --- If *Dagon* be thy God,
With high devotion invoke his aid;
His glory is concern'd. Let him dissolve
Those magic spells that gave our hero strength.
Then know whose God is God; *Dagon*, of mortal make,
Or that Great One whom *Abra'm's* sons adore.

CHORUS of Israelites.

Hear, Jacob's God! *Jehovah*, hear!
O save us, prostrate at thy Throne,
Isr'el depends on thee alone;
Save us, and shew that thou art near.

Harapha. *Dagon*! arise! attend thy sacred feast;
Thy honour calls, this day admits no rest.

CHORUS of the Priests of *Dagon*.

To song and dance we give the day,
Which shews thy universal sway.
Protect us by thy mighty hand,
And sweep this race from out the land.

Chorus of both.

Both Chorus's. Fix'd in his everlasting seat.
Chorus of Israelites. *Jehovah* rules the world in state.
Chorus Priests of Dagon. Great *Dagon* rules the world in state.
Both. His Thunder roars, Heav'n shakes, and Earth's aghast;
The Stars, with deep amaze,
Remain in stedfast gaze.
Chorus of Israelites. *Jehovah* is of Gods the first and last.
Chorus Priests of Dagon. Great *Dagon* is of Gods the first & last.

ACT



A C T III. S C E N E I.

SAMSON, MICAH, HARAPHA, and Chorus of Israelites.

MICAH.

MORE trouble is behind ; for *Harapha*
Comes on amain, speed in his steps and look.

Samson, I fear him not, nor all his Giant brood.

Harapha. *Samson*, to thee our Lords thus bid me say :
This day to *Dagon* we do sacrifice
With triumph, pomp, and games ; we know thy strength
Surpasses human race ; come then, and shew
Some public proof to grace this solemn feast.

Samson. I am an *Hebrew*, and our law forbids
My presence at their vain religious rites.

Harapha. “ This answer will not please ; rise then, with
“ speed.

Samson. “ Have they not artists, wrestlers, dancers, anticks,
“ That I’m pick’d out, a slave o’er-labour’d thus,
“ To make them sport with blind activity ?

Harapha. This answer will offend ; regard thyself.

Samson. Myself ! my conscience and internal peace !
Am I so broke with servitude, to yield
To such absurd commands ? To be their fool,
And play before their god.—I will not come.

Harapha. My message, giv’n with speed, brooks no delay.

A I R for *Harapha*.

*Presuming slave ! to move their wrath ;
For mercy sue,
Or vengeance due
Dooms in one fatal word thy death :
Consider, e’re it be too late,
To ward th’ unerring shaft of fate.*

Micah. Reflect then, *Samson* ; matters now are strain’d
Up to the height, whether to hold or break.
He’s gone, whose malice may enflame the Lords.

C

Samson.

Samson. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift
Of strength, again returning with my hair,
By vaunting it in honour to their god,
And prostituting holy things to idols?

Micah. How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach;
'Tis Heav'n alone can save both us and thee.

Chorus of *Israelites.*

*With thunder arm'd, great God, arise ;
Help, Lord, or Isr'el's champion dies :
To thy protection this thy servant take,
And save, O save us, for thy servant's sake.
With thunder arm'd, great God, arise ;
Help, Lord, or Isr'el's champion dies.*

Samson. Be of good courage ; I begin to feel
Some inward motions, which do bid me go.

“ Yet nothing will I do to stain my vow,
“ Or bring our law disgrace. Perhaps, this day
“ May be remark'd for some great act, or else
“ Be of my days the last ; Heav'n knows th' event.

Micah. In time thou hast resolv'd ; again he comes.

Harapha. *Samson*, this second summons send our Lords :
Art thou our captive, slave, and public drudge,
Yet dare dispute thy coming when we send ?
Haste thee at once, or we shall engines find
To move thee, tho' thou wert a solid rock.

Samson. Vain were their art, if try'd ; I yield to go,
Not thro' your streets be, like a wild beast, trail'd.

Harapha. You thus may win the Lords to set you free.

Samson. In nothing I'll comply that's scandalous,
Or sinful by our law.—Brethren, farewell ;
Your kind attendance now, I pray, forbear,
Lest it offend to see me girt with friends.
Expect of me you'll nothing hear impure,
Unworthy God, my nation, or myself.

Micah. So may'st thou act as serves his glory best.

Samson. Let but that spirit (which first rush'd on me
In the camp of *Dan*) inspire me at my need,
Then shall I make *Jehovah's* glory known,
Their Idol Gods shall from his presence fly,
Scatter'd, like sheep, before the God of Hosts.

A I R for Samson.

*Thus when the Sun from's watry bed,
All curtain'd with a cloudy red,
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave;
The wand'ring shadows, ghastly pale,
All troop to their infernal jail,
Each fetter'd ghost slips to his sev'ral grave.*

Micah. With might endu'd above the sons of men,
Swift as the lightning's glance his errand execute,
And spread his name amongst the Heathen round.

A I R for MICAH.

*The Holy One of Isr'el be thy guide,
The Angel of thy birth stand by thy side:
To fame immortal go,
Heav'n bids thee strike the blow:
The Holy One of Isr'el is thy guide.*

CHORUS of Israelites.

*To fame immortal go,
Heav'n bids thee strike the blow:
The Holy One of Isr'el is thy guide.*

S C E N E II.

MICAH, MANOA, and Chorus of Israelites.

Micah. Old Manoa, with youthful steps, makes haste
To find his son, or bring us some glad news.

Manoa. I come, my brethren, not to seek my son,
Who, at the feast, does play before the lords;
But give you part with me, what hopes I have
To work his liberty.

Micah. " Say, reverend sire,
" 'Twill much rejoice us to partake that hope.

Manoa. " I have attempted, one by one, the lords;
" Some I found harsh, set on revenge in spite;
" Others more moderate, their aim reward;
" The most confess'd they were enough reveng'd,
" If some convenient ransom was propos'd.

A I R and Chorus of Philistines at a Distance.

*Great Dagon has subdu'd our foe,
And brought their boasted hero low:*

*Sound out his pow'r in notes divine,
Praise him with mirth, high cheer, and wine.*

Manoa. What joy of noise was that? it tore the sky.

Micah. They shout and sing to see their dreaded foe
Now captive, blind, delighting with his strength.

Manoa. Cou'd my inheritance but ransom him,
Without my patrimony, having him,
The richest of my tribe.

Micah. Sons care to nurse
Their parents in old age; but you, your son.

Manoa. "My daily task shall be to guide his steps,
"And think of those high deeds by him atchiev'd;
"Combing those locks which down his shoulders wave,
"At once our nation's strength and ornament.

AIR for MANOA.

*How willing my paternal love
The weight to share
Of filial care,
And part of sorrow's burden prove:
Tho' wand'ring in the shades of night,
Whilst I have eyes he wants no light.*

Micah. Your hopes of his deliv'ry seem not vain,
In which all *Isr'el's* friends participate.

Manoa. I know your friendly minds, and ---

[*A Symphony here of horror and confusion.*]

Heav'n! what noise?

Horribly loud, unlike the former shout.

CHORUS of Philistines at a Distance.

*Hear us, our God! O hear our cry!
Death! ruin! fall'n! no help is nigh:
O mercy, Heav'n! we sink! we die!*

Micah. Noise call you this? an universal groan,
As if the world's inhabitation perish'd!
Blood, death, and ruin, at their utmost point!

Manoa. Ruin indeed! Oh! they have slain my son!

Micah. Thy son is rather slaying them; that cry
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.

Manoa. "What shall we do? stay here, or run and see?"

Micah. "Keep here, lest into danger's mouth we run.

"This general cry speaks all *Philistia* fall'n.

"What

“ What if his eye-sight now by Heav’n restor’d,

“ Enables him to vengeance on his foes?

Manoa. “ That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

Micah. “ Things as incredible our God has wrought

“ Of old; what hinders now?” — But see, my friends,
One hither speeds, an *Hebrew* of our tribe.

S C E N E III.

MANOA, MICAH, *and an Israelite Officer.* *Chorus*
of Israelites.

Officer. Where shall I run, or which way fly the thoughts
Of this most horrid fight? O countrymen!
You’re in this sad event too much concern’d.

Micah. The accident was loud, we long to know from
whence.

Officer. Let me recover breath; it will burst forth.

Manoa. Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.

Officer. Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fall’n.

Manoa. Sad! not to us: But now relate by whom.

Officer. By *Samson* done.

Manoa. The sorrow lessens still,
And nigh converts to joy.

Officer. Oh! *Manoa!*

In vain I would refrain; — the evil tale
Too soon will rudely pierce thy aged ear.

Manoa. Suspense in news is torture; speak them out.

Officer. Then take the worst in brief — *Samson* is dead.

Manoa. The worst indeed! My hopes to free him hence
Are blasted all; but Death, who sets all free,
Hath paid his ransom now. “ What windy joys

“ Had I this day conceiv’d? abortive all!

“ Like the fair first-born bloom of early spring,

“ Nipt with the lagging rear of winter’s frost.

Micah. Yet, e’re we give the reins to grief, say first
How dy’d he? Death to Life his crown or shame.

Officer. Unwounded of his enemies he fell,
At once he did destroy, and was destroy’d.
The edifice, where all were met to see,
Upon their heads, and on his own, he pull’d.

Manoa. O lastly over-strong against thyself!
A dreadful way thou took’st to thy revenge:
Glorious, yet dearly bought!

Micah. “ In life and death
“ Thou hast fulfill’d the work for which foretold:

“ And

" And now thou ly'st victorious, tho' self-kill'd,
 " Triumphant o'er a heap of slaughter'd foes,
 " More than thy life had slain. Let *Isr'el* now
 " The voice of lamentation raise, and sing
 " A hymn of sorrow to this honour'd soul.

A I R for Micah.

*Ye sons of Isr'el now lament,
 Your spear is broke, your bow's unbent;
 Your glory's fled,
 Amongst the dead
 Great Samson lies,
 For ever, ever, clos'd his eyes.*

CHORUS of Israelites.

*Weep, Isr'el, weep a louder strain,
 Samson, your strength, your hero's slain.*

Manoa. Proceed we hence to find his body soak'd
 In vile *Philistine* blood, with the pure stream
 And cleansing herbs wash off the clodded gore;
 Then solemnly attend him to my tomb,
 With silent obsequies and fun'ral train.

Micah. The body comes; we'll meet it on the way
 With laurels ever green, and branching palm;
 Then lay it in its monument, hung round
 With all his trophies, and great acts enroll'd
 In verse heroic, or sweet lyric song.

Manoa. There shall all *Isr'el's* valiant youth resort,
 And from his Memory inflame their breasts
 To matchless valour, whilst they sing his praise.

A I R for Manoa.

*Glorious hero, may thy grave
 Peace and honour ever have;
 After all thy pains and woes,
 Rest eternal, sweet repose.*

Israelite Woman. The virgins too shall, on their feastful days,
 Visit his tomb with flow'rs, and there bewail
 His loss unfortunate in nuptial choice.

CHORUS

CHORUS of VIRGINS.

*Bring the laurels, bring the bays,
Strew his herse, and strew the ways.*

A I R.

*May ev'ry hero fall like thee,
Thro' sorrow to felicity.*

CHORUS repeated.

*Bring the laurels, bring the bays,
Strew his herse, and strew the ways.*

Manoa. Come, come ; no time for lamentation now ;
No cause for grief ; *Samson* like *Samson* fell ;
Both life and death heroic. To his foes
Ruin is left ; to him eternal fame.

Micah. Why should we weep or wail, dispraise or blame,
Where all is well and fair to quiet us ?
Praise we *Jehovah* then, who, to the end,
Not parted from him, but assisted still,
'Till desolation fill'd *Philistia's* lands,
Honour and freedom given to *Jacob's* seed.

GRAND CHORUS.

*Let the bright seraphims in burning row,
Their loud, up-lifted Angel-trumpets blow :
Let the cherubic host, in tuneful choirs,
Touch their immortal harps with golden wires :
Let their cœlestial concerts all unite,
Ever to sound his praise in endless blaze of light.*

The E N · D.



